United Nations A/54/99

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 May 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Items 39, 112 and 117 of the preliminary list*
Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Human rights questions

Letter dated 19 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Hungarian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Budapest Declaration with its appendices, as well as the text of the Conclusions of the Chair with its appendix containing the Declaration on the Kosovo Crisis, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 7 May 1999 in Budapest, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Council of Europe (see annexes).**

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 39, 112 and 117 of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) André **Erdõs**
Ambassador

* A/54/50.

** The annexes are being circulated in the languages of submission only.

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Annex I

[Original: English and French]

THE BUDAPEST DECLARATION

For a Greater Europe without dividing lines

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 May 1999 at its 104th Session)

Half a century after the establishment of the Council of Europe, which made democracy, human rights and the rule of law permanent priorities for post-war Europe,

Ten years after the major political upheavals which opened the way to reunification of our continent on the basis of the ideals and principles which are the common heritage of all European states,

At a time when the values on which the Council of Europe is based are negated and denied in the heart of our continent,

WE, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S MEMBER STATES, ASSEMBLED IN BUDAPEST FOR OUR 104th SESSION:

REAFFIRM OUR DETERMINATION FULLY TO USE THE POTENTIAL OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, as the pre-eminent political institution capable of bringing together, on an equal footing and in permanent structures, all the countries of Greater Europe,

COMMIT OURSELVES TO BUILDING THIS GREATER EUROPE WITHOUT DIVIDING LINES. For this purpose, we shall:

1. continue to consolidate **the stability of our continent based on democratic institutions,**

- honour all the commitments we have given to each other, to the Council of Europe and to our citizens,

- participate actively in the machineries that we have established to ensure compliance with these commitments,

- extend assistance to member states engaged in democratic institution-building, policy development and legal reform, for the purpose of reaching uniform standards of democratic development throughout the continent,

- pursue the fight against terrorism, aggressive nationalism and threats to the territorial integrity of States,

2. seek to strengthen **the political, legal, social and cultural cohesion of Greater Europe:**

- expand the common legal area shared by Council of Europe member states, which already comprises 173 conventions and more than a thousand recommendations to governments,

- combat the divisive factors constituted by racism and xenophobia, intolerance - whether political, cultural or religious - and discrimination against minorities,

- build on the community of culture formed by a Europe enriched by its diversity, confident in its identity and open to the world,

- work out common responses to the challenges facing modern societies, such as the development of the new information technologies, for which guidelines for a European policy are set out in the Declaration contained in Appendix 1,

3. reaffirm **the primacy of the human person in our policies:**

- effectively guarantee the fundamental rights secured to individuals in our member states by the European Convention on Human Rights, under the supervision of the European Court of Human Rights,

- promote these rights, and those protected by other basic Council of Europe instruments, in particular through the action of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights appointed under the Resolution contained in Appendix 2,

- oppose firmly any approach which could lead to double standards on human rights issues in all their aspects,

- develop a new educational approach to democratic citizenship, based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, as set out in the Declaration and the Programme contained in Appendix 3,

4. continue to promote **our shared commitment to democracy and the rule of law** by developing the existing partnership between:

- the governments of the Council of Europe's member states, respecting the principle of equality between states and expressing the hope that all the countries of Europe will soon be able to embrace the principles on which the Organisation is based,

- national governments and parliaments, represented in the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, the statutory organs of the Council of Europe; local and regional authorities, represented in the Council of Europe by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe; and structures making it possible to associate non governmental organisations and civil society with intergovernmental co-operation,

- the Council of Europe, within its field of competence, and the other organisations - including on the regional level -which help to develop and structure our continent, in particular the European Union and the OSCE.

We are determined to continue, in the 21st century, to contribute to building democratic stability and co-operation in Europe. Accordingly, we undertake :

- to complete the **reform of the structures and the activities of the Council of Europe** and adapt them to the future challenges;

to seek political and legal solutions making it possible to transcend state frontiers and promote peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the nations, minorities, and cultural, linguistic and religious communities which together make up our continent; in this spirit, we shall implement the **Council of Europe contribution to the stability programme for South-East Europe** and work for peace as well as full respect for human rights and the rule of law throughout Europe.

APPENDIX 1

DECLARATION ON A EUROPEAN POLICY FOR NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The Committee of Ministers,

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe;

In response to the decision of the Council of Europe's Second Summit to develop a European policy for the application of new information technologies with a view to ensuring respect for human rights, promoting cultural diversity, fostering freedom of expression and information and maximising the educational and cultural potential of these technologies;

Taking into consideration all relevant international texts in this field, including those which have come into being since the Second Summit, notably the political texts adopted in Thessalonika by the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy (December 1997) and Resolution 53/70 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (December 1998);

Conscious of the profound changes brought about by the digitalisation, convergence and continuing globalisation of information networks;

Welcoming the opportunities offered by the new information technologies to promote freedom of expression and information, political pluralism and cultural diversity, and to contribute to a more democratic and sustainable information society;

Recognising the potential of new information technologies to improve openness, transparency and efficiency at all levels - national, regional and local - of the governance, administration and judicial systems of member States and hence to consolidate democratic stability;

Aware also of the potential risks involved in the use of these technologies for both individuals and democratic society;

Convinced that a clear regulatory framework will help to promote those opportunities and avoid those risks;

Acknowledging the important role of the private sector in the creation, development and use of the new information technologies and wishing to foster partnership between the public and private sectors to maximise the benefit of these technologies to their societies;

Convinced that a genuinely democratic information society based on the core values of the Council of Europe can be achieved through a policy framework encouraging Access and Participation, Competence and Empowerment, Creativity, Diversity and ensuring Protection;

Urges the governments of member States, acting, where appropriate, with public and private partners,

(i) With respect to Access to and Participation in new information technologies

- to promote the broadest possible access for all to the new information and communication services, for example through the development of widespread access points in public places;

- to enable all individuals to play a more active role in public life, at national, regional and local levels, by using the new information technologies to:

- provide easy access to information about and direct links to local, regional and national administrative and judicial services;

- make available official texts of local, regional and national laws and regulations, of international agreements and of the jurisprudence of national and international jurisdictions;

- to encourage the free flow of information, opinions and ideas through the use of the new information technologies;

- to encourage the development, production and distribution of cultural and educational material and its widespread dissemination;

- to encourage effective international co-operation to deliver the benefits of improved access and increased transparency;

- to contribute towards equal possibilities in the use of new technologies for all European countries.

(ii) With respect to Competence and Empowerment with regard to new information technologies

- to promote broad understanding in all sectors of society of the new information technologies and their potential;

- to help individuals to develop competence in the use of new information technologies:

  - through training at all levels of the education system, formal and informal, and throughout life.

  - through the definition of new professional profiles and training curricula;

- thereby to enable individuals to make active, critical and discerning use of these technologies;

- to promote better and wider use of the new information technologies in teaching and learning, paying special attention to gender equality issues;

- to encourage use of information networks in the education field to promote mutual understanding between peoples, both on individual and institutional levels.

(iii) With respect to Creativity of individuals and of cultural industries

- to encourage the use of the new information technologies as a form of artistic and literary expression and as a means of forming creative partnerships, in particular between art, science and industry;

- to stimulate the innate creativity of each individual through media literacy and the development of educational programmes using new information technologies;

- to work, in the context of convergence and continuing globalisation of information networks, with the cultural industries to help ensure that their development enhances creativity;

- to encourage the European cultural industries to work together to increase their creativity and so provide a wide variety, while ensuring the quality of products and services in the information networks.

(iv) With respect to Diversity of content and language

- to encourage the development of a wide range of communication and information networks, as well as the diversity of content and language, so as to foster political pluralism, cultural diversity and sustainable development ;

- to promote the full use by all, including minorities, of the opportunities for exchange of opinion and self-expression offered by the new information technologies;

- to acknowledge the usefulness of these technologies in enabling all European countries and regions to express their cultural identities;

- to encourage the provision of cultural, educational and other products and services in an appropriate variety of languages and to promote the greatest possible diversity of these products and services;

- to ensure, as far as possible, that information systems, in the administrative and legal fields, offer material which takes account of regional and linguistic criteria and which meets the specific needs of concerned minorities.

(v) With respect to Protection of rights and freedoms

- to ensure respect for human rights and human dignity, notably freedom of expression, as well as the protection of minors, the protection of privacy and personal data, and the protection of the individual against all forms of racial discrimination in the use and development of new information technologies, through regulation and self-regulation, and through the development of technical standards and systems, codes of conduct and other measures;

- to adopt national and international measures for the effective investigation and punishment of information technology crimes and to combat the existence of safe havens for perpetrators of such crimes;

- to ensure the effective protection of the rights holders whose works are disseminated on the new information and communication services;

- to encourage the establishment of international standards and safeguards essential for the guarantee of authenticity of electronically transmitted documents and legally binding agreements;

- to enhance this framework of protection, including the development of codes of conduct embodying ethical principles for the use of the new information technologies.

APPENDIX 2

RESOLUTION (99) 50
ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Committee of Ministers,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is the achievement of greater unity between its Members and that one of the methods by which that aim is to be pursued is the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Having regard to the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe at their Second Summit (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997);

Considering also that the 50th Anniversary of the Council of Europe provides an occasion to enhance further the work undertaken since its creation,

Decides to institute the office of Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights ("the Commissioner") with the following terms of reference:

Article 1

1. The Commissioner shall be a non-judicial institution to promote education in, awareness of and respect for human rights, as embodied in the human rights instruments of the Council of Europe.

2. The Commissioner shall respect the competence of, and perform functions other than those fulfilled by, the supervisory bodies set up under the European Convention of Human Rights or under other human rights instruments of the Council of Europe. The Commissioner shall not take up individual complaints.

Article 2

The Commissioner shall function independently and impartially.

Article 3

The Commissioner shall:

a. promote education in and awareness of human rights in the member States;

b. contribute to the promotion of the effective observance and full enjoyment of human rights in the member States;

c. provide advice and information on the protection of human rights and prevention of human rights violations. When dealing with the public, the Commissioner shall, wherever possible, make use of and co-operate with human rights structures in the member States. Where such structures do not exist, the Commissioner will encourage their establishment;

d. facilitate the activities of national ombudsmen or similar institutions in the field of human rights;

e. identify possible shortcomings in the law and practice of member States concerning the compliance with human rights as embodied in the instruments of the Council of Europe, promote the effective implementation of these standards by member States and assist them, with their agreement, in their efforts to remedy such shortcomings;

f. address, whenever the Commissioner deems it appropriate, a report concerning a specific matter to the Committee of Ministers or to the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers;

g. respond, in the manner the Commissioner deems appropriate, to requests made by the Committee of Ministers or the Parliamentary Assembly, in the context of their task of ensuring compliance with the human rights standards of the Council of Europe;

h. submit an annual report to the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly;

i. co-operate with other international institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights while avoiding unnecessary duplication of activities.

Article 4

The Commissioner shall take into account views expressed by the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concerning the Commissioner's activities.

Article 5

1. The Commissioner may act on any information relevant to the Commissioner's functions. This will notably include information addressed to the Commissioner by governments, national parliaments, national ombudsmen or similar institutions in the field of human rights, individuals and organisations.

2. The gathering of information relevant to the Commissioner's functions shall not give rise to any general reporting system for member States.

Article 6

1. Member States shall facilitate the independent and effective performance by the Commissioner of his or her functions. In particular, they shall facilitate the Commissioner's contacts, including travel, in the context of the mission of the Commissioner and provide in good time information requested by the Commissioner.

2. The Commissioner shall be entitled, during the exercise of his or her functions, to the privileges and immunities provided for in Article 40 of the Statute of the Council of Europe and in the agreements made thereunder.

Article 7

The Commissioner may directly contact governments of member States of the Council of Europe.

Article 8

1. The Commissioner may issue recommendations, opinions and reports.

2. The Committee of Ministers may authorise the publication of any recommendation, opinion or report addressed to it.

Article 9

1. The Commissioner shall be elected by the Parliamentary Assembly by a majority of votes cast from a list of three candidates drawn up by the Committee of Ministers.

2. Member States may submit candidatures by letter addressed to the Secretary General. Candidates must be nationals of a member State of the Council of Europe.

Article 10

The candidates shall be eminent personalities of a high moral character having recognised expertise in the field of human rights, a public record of attachment to the values of the Council of Europe and the personal authority necessary to discharge the mission of the Commissioner effectively. During his or her term of office, the Commissioner shall not engage in any activity which is incompatible with the demands of a full-time office.

Article 11

The Commissioner shall be elected for a non-renewable term of office of six years.

Article 12

1. An Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights shall be established within the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

2. The expenditure on the Commissioner and the Office of the Commissioner shall be borne by the Council of Europe.

APPENDIX 3

DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME ON EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP, BASED ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS

The Committee of Ministers,

1. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe,

2. Recalling the Council of Europe's mission to build a freer, more tolerant and just society based on solidarity, common values and a cultural heritage enriched by its diversity;

3. Reaffirming its attachment to the spiritual and moral values which are the true source of individual freedom, political pluralism and the rule of law, principles which form the basis of all genuine democracy;

4. Underlining the primary role of the European Convention on Human Rights and the other Council of Europe and United Nations fundamental instruments which guarantee to individuals the exercise of their inalienable rights;

5. Having regard to the Final Declaration and Action Plan adopted at the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe which emphasise the need to develop education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens;

6. Insisting on the urgency of strengthening individuals' awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities so that they develop a capacity to exercise these rights and respect the rights of others;

7. Stressing the fundamental role of education in promoting the active participation of all individuals in democratic life at all levels: local, regional and national;

8. Recognising the action of the Council of Europe in all areas that have a bearing on fostering responsible citizenship in democratic society;

9. Concerned by the development of violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and religious intolerance, which constitutes a major threat to the reinforcement of peace and democracy both at national and international level;

10. Conscious of the responsibilities towards present and future generations to safeguard a natural and man-made healthy and high quality environment,

11. DECLARES that EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP BASED ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS:

i. constitutes a lifelong learning experience and a participative process developed in various contexts: in the family, in educational institutions, in the workplace, through professional, political and non-governmental organisations, in local communities and through leisure and cultural activities and the media, as well as through activities for the protection and improvement of the natural and man-made environment;

ii. equips men and women to play an active part in public life and to shape in a responsible way their own destiny and that of their society;

iii. aims to instil a culture of human rights which will ensure full respect for those rights and understanding of responsibilities that flow from them;

iv. prepares people to live in a multicultural society and to deal with difference knowledgeably, sensibly, tolerantly and morally;

v. strengthens social cohesion, mutual understanding and solidarity;

vi. must be inclusive of all age groups and sectors of society;

12. EMPHASISES the importance of the current activities on education for democratic citizenship carried out as part of the Strasbourg Summit Action Plan;

13. CONSIDERS that further action is necessary to implement education for democratic citizenship (on a sustainable basis) at all levels and in all areas;

14. CALLS on member States to:

- promote democratic citizenship based on the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

- make education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens an essential component of all educational, training, cultural and youth policies and practices;

15. DECIDES to:

- give high priority to education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities in the Council of Europe work programme;

- adopt the Programme which is appended to this Declaration and agree to its co-ordinated implementation by the Council of Europe sectors concerned;

- adopt guidelines and recommendations to member States before the end of the year 2000 in the light of proposals made by relevant Conferences of Specialised Ministers.

PROGRAMME
ON EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP
BASED ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe, meeting in Strasbourg for their Second Summit, expressed their "desire to develop education for democratic citizenship based on the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the participation of young people in civil society" (Final Declaration).

2. OBJECTIVES

The Programme aims to implement the Final Declaration by providing a European framework for the strengthening of education for democratic citizenship at all levels. Based on its past and current activities, the Council of Europe, in the years to come, should step up its efforts to:

2.1 identify and develop novel and effective strategies, means and methods for the strengthening of the democratic fabric of society;

2.2 explore major issues regarding education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities;

2.3 exchange and disseminate knowledge, experience and good practice across Europe;

2.4 provide assistance for reforms of education and other relevant policies;

2.5 develop a platform for networking and partnerships;

2.6 foster public awareness of individuals' rights and understanding of their responsibilities.

3. KEY ISSUES

The following specific issues will be given attention within the Programme:

3.1 the evolving concept of democratic citizenship, in its political, legal, cultural and social dimensions;

3.2 human rights, including their social dimension and each person's obligation to respect the rights of others;

3.3 the relationships between rights and responsibilities as well as common responsibilities in combating social exclusion, marginalisation, civic apathy, intolerance and violence;

3.4 the core competencies for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities;

3.5 the development of active citizenship through different innovative methods of active and participative learning in a lifelong learning perspective;

3.6 learning democracy in school and university life, including participation in decision-making and the associated structures of pupils, students and teachers;

3.7 partnerships between educational institutions, local communities, non-governmental organisations, and political authorities;

3.8 the nature of and links between the various approaches to Education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities such as human rights education, civic education, intercultural education, history teaching, democratic leadership training, conflict resolution and confidence building;

3.9 the role of the media and new information technologies in Education for democratic citizenship based on citizen's rights and responsibilities;

3.10 changing patterns of work and their implications for processes of socialisation;

3.11 forms of voluntary work and participation in civil society, particularly at local level;

3.12 young peoples' lifestyles and the different forms of their involvement in society.

4. ACTIVITIES

The main activities of the programme will be:

4.1 *Policy-making*

4.1.1 Draw up guidelines and recommendations on education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities to be presented to the forthcoming Conference of European Ministers of Education (Cracow, 2000) as well as to other appropriate ministerial conferences;

4.1.2 Provide assistance in the establishment of national plans for human rights education as part of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;

4.1.3 Encourage the establishment of national plans for education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities in member States;

4.1.4 Provide assistance to member States in the reforms of the educational and training systems (curriculum and textbook development, teacher training), so as to include education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities in programmes at all levels;

4.1.5 Examine the setting up of instruments for the recognition of voluntary involvement in society and of informal learning periods as a means of promoting education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities.

4.2 *Research and data collection*

4.2.1 Explore the above-mentioned key issues in seminars, colloquies and through action research;

4.2.2 Survey, in the different countries, developments in education for democratic citizenship at national level in close co-operation with non-governmental organisations and civil society at large;

4.2.3 Provide expertise and information on available resources and projects in and outside the Council of Europe;

4.2.4 Collect and evaluate examples of good practice.

4.3 *Training and awareness-raising*

4.3.1 Produce training and educational tools in particular using audio-visual means and new technologies;

4.3.2 Develop a practitioners' forum through the Internet;

4.3.3 Increase and strengthen the organisation of and support for national, regional and local information and training workshops and seminars;

4.3.4 Relate existing Council of Europe training programmes to the above-mentioned key issues;

4.3.5 Prepare practical, action-oriented awareness-raising materials;

4.3.6 Make plans for the setting up of a European campaign for education for democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities.

5. WORKING METHODS

The activities should:

5.1 be both exploratory and operational, focusing on innovation, training and awareness-raising, and the transfer of knowledge and know-how;

5.2 be carried out through intersectorial and multidisciplinary co-ordination within the Council of Europe and in member States;

5.3 seek close co-operation and joint projects with other international organisations active in democratic citizenship education, such as the European Union, the United Nations, Unesco and the OSCE as well as with non-governmental organisations and the private sector;

5.4 rely on an interacting network of "focal points" to be established in member States;

5.5 develop, whenever possible, an action-research process in member States so as to ensure the participation of the people concerned as well as the involvement of grassroots in the use of research results.

Annex II

[Original: English]

104th SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS (BUDAPEST, 7 MAY 1999)

CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAIR

1. The 104th Session of the Committee of Ministers has been exceptional in more than one respect. Two days ago, in the presence of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, we officially commemorated our Organisation's 50th Anniversary in London, the city where the Council of Europe's Statute was signed on 5 May 1949. Today, Hungary, which ten years ago opened the first breach in the Iron Curtain that then divided our continent, is proud to have hosted the closing ceremonies of the 50th Anniversary, where the emphasis has been placed on the past decade which has completely changed the face of Europe and made it possible **to bring together all Europeans under a single roof,** that of the Council of Europe.

2. In its first forty years the Council of Europe succeeded in creating a unique instrument that enables not only Europe's governments and parliaments but also its local and regional authorities and the forces of its civil society to unite their efforts with a view to "safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage", to find common responses to the challenges facing European societies and to forge the links of a "closer unity" through co-operation in a variety of fields. By its policy of openness to the countries of central and eastern Europe and by the fight of the latter to free themselves from totalitarianism, the ground was also prepared for reuniting the two parts of Europe.

3. The end of division in Europe has given the process of European unification its true dimension, and entrusted once more the Council of Europe with its original mission of consolidating liberty and law on the scale of greater Europe. In this spirit, and first of all, **the Committee of Ministers has welcomed the way in which the Council of Europe has adapted to the new European architecture:**

- since Hungary's accession in November 1990, the Council of Europe has gradually admitted virtually all the central and east European countries as members, in accordance with the political mandate conferred on it by its First Summit of Heads of State and Government (Vienna, 8-9 October 1993). Only a few days ago, Georgia became the 41st member state, and the presence here in Budapest of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Azerbaijan and of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as of the Minister of State of Monaco, portends further enlargement;

- the European cultural co-operation has played a key role in this enlargement policy: Council of Europe's "antechamber", the Cultural Convention- to which the 46 European States present today fully participate - is the crucible of European cultural identity, enriched by its diversity;

- the Council of Europe's enlargement has reinforced its political role, giving it major new responsibilities. Over the past decade the Organisation has particularly developed its contribution to Europe's democratic security by aiding reforms and monitoring compliance with commitments undertaken by member States. It has also played a pioneering role by adopting legal instruments in new fields of concern such as the protection of national minorities, bioethics and prevention of corruption and organised crime, and by strengthening existing instruments in a number of areas including local self-government, transfrontier co-operation and social cohesion;

- at the same time new bodies have been set up to ensure the effective exercise of the fundamental rights now secured to almost 800 million Europeans under the control of the European Court of Human Rights, to associate the level closest to the citizens with the process of European co-operation through the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and to co-ordinate national policies in the fight against racism and intolerance with the European Commission against racism and intolerance (ECRI);

- fresh impetus has also been given to co-operation between the Council of Europe and its principal partners in the new European architecture, in particular the European Union (with which joint programmes to further democratic reforms have been drawn up and implemented) and the OSCE. Similarly, mechanisms have been created for associating non-European countries with the work of the Organisation through the observer status granted in turn to the United States of America, Canada and Japan;

- lastly, the Council of Europe has refocused its action on the four priority fields fixed by its Second Summit (Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997) and mobilised all its vital strength to put into effect the Action Plan adopted eighteen months ago by the Heads of State and Government, as the report submitted to the Committee of Ministers on the subject attests.

4. In this context, the Committee of Ministers thanked the tens of thousands of committed parliamentarians, government officials, experts, representatives of local and regional government and non-governmental organisations, members of the European Court of Human Rights and European Commission of Human Rights as well as employees of the Council of Europe, who have participated to the common achievements, throughout those fifty years.

5. The Ministers also underlined the importance of the standard-setting role of the Council of Europe, which has led to the adoption of 173 Conventions and more than a thousand recommendations to governments. They confirmed their permanent commitment to the common legal area thus created between the member States of the Organisation, and proceeded to 44 signatures and 13 ratifications of conventions. In this context, they welcomed the entry into force, on 1st May 1999, of the Enlarged Partial Agreement establishing the Group of States against corruption (GRECO), as well as that of the revised Social Charter, which will take effect on 1st July 1999.

6. In view of this fundamental "acquis", **the Committee of Ministers has decided , on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary, to move still further ahead** by:

- creating the office of Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, who should be appointed as soon as possible, and by 1 January 2000 at the latest;

- adopting a Declaration and Programme on education for democratic citizenship founded on citizens' rights and responsibilities;

- adopting a Declaration concerning a European policy on New Information Technologies;

and has expressed its determination to pursue the process of renewal of the Council of Europe in particular by the adoption of a structural reform of the Organisation in the light of the progress report presented by the Deputies at the present meeting.

7. On this basis **the Committee of Ministers has proclaimed its commitment to building the Greater Europe without dividing lines** by adopting the "Budapest Declaration for a Greater Europe without Dividing Lines". In order to give this enterprise the democratic legitimacy without which Europe cannot be built, the Committee of Ministers will step up its dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly, which will be the leading partner in the

implementation of the Declaration, and with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which fulfils a vital role in its specific field of responsibility. The importance of the Council of Europe's co-operation with its two main partners, the European Union and the OSCE, was also reaffirmed.

8. In this context, the Ministers held an in-depth exchange of view on the crisis in Kosovo and the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Very strong views were expressed in this respect. The Ministers endorsed the Council of Europe contribution to the stability programme for South-East Europe and took note of the **Declaration on the Kosovo crisis** made by the Chair (see appendix).

9. Realising that the process of building Europe cannot be restricted to Council of Europe member states or confined within Europe's geographical frontiers, the Committee of Ministers finally welcomed the presence of representatives of the United Nations, as well as of the four observer countries, the Holy See, the United States of America, Canada and Japan. In this context it looked forward to seeing Mexico too being granted observer status in the near future.

10. The 105th Session of the Committee of Ministers has been fixed for 9 November 1999, the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

APPENDIX

DECLARATION ON THE KOSOVO CRISIS

by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Fifty years ago the Council of Europe was established with the main aim to secure peace through the development of pluralist democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Today, all basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are massively violated in the conflict related to Kosovo. The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, meeting in Budapest on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Organisation, expresses the Committee's deep concern over the tragic developments which have caused terrible suffering for hundreds of thousands of civilian victims.

The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe firmly condemns those responsible for the massive deportations and violations of human rights and humanitarian law against the civilian population; they must be brought to justice. In this respect he reiterates the support for the action of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, established in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers expresses his deep appreciation for the large scale humanitarian assistance from governments, international organisations and NGOs to all civilian victims of the conflict. He calls on all governments and competent international institutions to continue and intensify their humanitarian assistance to refugees and to offer them temporary shelter.

The Chairman expresses support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General in search of a peaceful settlement to the Kosovo crisis in full respect for human rights, the rule of law and the basic principles of international law. He further welcomes the outcome of the G8 Foreign Ministers' meeting on 6 May 1999 and the general principles adopted on the political solution to the Kosovo crisis.

The Chairman reiterates the willingness of the Council of Europe to contribute, in its fields of competence, to the

implementation of the political settlement and to political and institutional reconstruction in the region.

The Council of Europe will mobilise all efforts and resources to assist in the restoration of democratic stability and security in South East Europe. The Council of Europe looks forward to the day when all countries of the region will abide by the principles of pluralist democracy, human rights (including the rights of national minorities) and the rule of law, and will fulfil the conditions to become members of the Organisation.